

I believe the vast majority of Americans does their level best to file an honest tax return and pay their fair share of taxes. It boils my blood and theirs, too, to think that the tax cheaters are getting off the hook because the cops are not on the beat.

Historically, Republicans have taken away those auditors; have taken away the checks of the big, wealthy individuals and corporations. And they, of course, are tempted to cheat. Why let that happen when the vast majority of American families is doing the right thing? House Republicans just voted for a bill that will add \$100 billion to the deficit to take away these auditors. That is not the way to balance a budget, and it is not fair to American taxpayers.

If that is not enough, as part of the deal, Speaker MCCARTHY also promised MAGA hard-liners that the House would vote on that jumbo-sized national sales tax, which I spoke about. As Grover Norquist, who is quite a conservative and quite a man on the issue of taxes, said: It is a political gift to Biden and the Democrats to consider a national sales tax. Well, we say: If this is a gift, no thanks.

In the last 2 years, America's economy broke records and created 11 million jobs—the strongest job creation in the history of this Nation. The Nation's unemployment rate is near a 50-year low. Gas prices are finally coming down. Inflation is just starting to ease, and the deficit is going down. We need to keep the country and economy moving in the right direction, not devastate Social Security and Medicare and certainly not impose a national 30-percent sales tax.

Speaker MCCARTHY is meeting with President Biden tomorrow for the first time since he became Speaker. He needs to show up not just with platitudes but with a plan, in writing, as to what the Republicans want to put on the table.

What is the Republican plan? Are they going to cut Social Security and Medicare? Mr. MCCARTHY said “no, no way,” on a Sunday talk show this weekend, but the math doesn't add up for his fiscal goals unless he goes after the entitlement programs.

If you are going to do that, Speaker MCCARTHY, be honest with the American people. Are the Republicans planning to slash money for education? healthcare? veterans? transportation? clean water? In the first two decades of this century, thanks in large part to the National Institutes of Health, cancer deaths went down by almost one-third in the United States—saving an estimated 3.5 million lives. Are we going to cut medical research, Mr. Speaker?

Speaker MCCARTHY and MAGA Republicans need to level with the American people.

Speaker MCCARTHY, my ask is very simple: Put your plan on the table.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

NATO

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, today I rise to highlight the need to strengthen our alliances as bad actors around the world continue to threaten peace and global stability.

In August, my Senate colleagues and I took a critical step to bolster our defense by ratifying Finland and Sweden as NATO members. This was the right action to take. It is time for all remaining NATO member countries to follow this example and approve expanding our Transatlantic Alliance by adding two very valuable and reliable partners.

In just a few short weeks, we will be marking a grim milestone of the 1-year anniversary of Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine. Russia's brutal actions in Ukraine, coupled with its increasingly escalatory rhetoric and continued aggression, have shown us and our allies that we must strengthen our collective ability to maintain global stability. Given their proximity to Russia, Finland and Sweden are investing in their capabilities to prevent a similar attack.

The Finns have demonstrated their willingness to enhance NATO's military strength by significantly increasing military spending above NATO's requirements, participating in joint military training exercises, and strengthening its air power with upgrades to an F-35 fleet under the Foreign Military Sales program.

Finland has been one of NATO's most active partners and a strong contributor to NATO-led operations and missions in the Balkans, Afghanistan, and Iraq. The Finns have also delivered crucial support to Ukraine by providing hundreds of millions of dollars in military aid in addition to providing critical humanitarian assistance.

Finland's large, well-trained ground force and increasingly capable air force are interoperable with NATO. The Finns also have extensive experience in monitoring Russian activities along their 833-mile shared border, and its addition would make defending the Baltic States so much easier.

Earlier this month, I visited Finland and met with defense leaders who reaffirmed their commitment to bilateral cooperation and the value they would bring to NATO. As a member of NATO, I have no doubt Finland would be a net contributor of security, not a taker.

I strongly urge remaining members to join the U.S. and approve Finland's and Sweden's accessions to NATO to confront evolving security challenges and the ongoing threat posed by Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

TRIBUTE TO THE SAINT JAMES ACADEMY TROJANS AND JIMMY PERRY

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Mr. President, today, I want to begin by recognizing a

former colleague of mine and some of Alabama's student athletes.

The Saint James Academy Trojans in Montgomery, AL, recently won the Class 3A Football State Championship for the first time in the school's history. The team, no doubt, put in many long hours on and off the field to prepare for this great, historic achievement. Winning is always fun, but the lessons learned about dedication, discipline, and perseverance will stay with these young men and coaches forever.

I also want to extend a special congrats to the Trojans' coach, Jimmy Perry, on the State championship and on his recent retirement announcement. What a way to go out.

I first met Coach Perry when I hired him in 1999 to be the director of football operations at Auburn University. It was clear then that he had a very bright future ahead of him in the world of coaching, and it is fitting that his coaching career has ended with this historic victory.

So congratulations to Coach Perry and his team at Saint James Academy. I wish them all the best and the coach all the best in future endeavors.

BIG GOVERNMENT

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Mr. President, last week, I spent time on the floor urging my colleagues to prioritize freedom in the 118th Congress. By learning from the mistakes of overregulation in the past, we can focus on creating a brighter future and a more prosperous future for all Americans.

We should be doing everything we can to fix the problems created by the government and get Americans back on their feet by unleashing our economic potential and opening doors of opportunity. Unfortunately, too many here in Washington are still focused on growing the size of government and adding regulations they say will save the environment. However, very rarely does making the government larger benefit the American taxpayers and the American citizens of this country.

For decades, fans of Big Government have used climate change warnings to grow their power—for decades, for as long as I can remember. They have claimed we are near the edge of a climate cliff—a prediction they know is impossible to prove and has never come true. Of course, they claim the only solution to this cooked-up crisis is for you, the American taxpayer, to sacrifice even more of your freedoms to tackle this so-called climate dilemma. This sacrifice won't come from the elites, who flew their private jets to Switzerland just a few weeks ago—the ones who are crowing about this. They flew, just a couple of weeks ago, to lecture, while they were there, the working families of this country. No. These sacrifices are expected to be made by average, hard-working American taxpayers. That is what they want.

They want you to give up your affordable gas for imported fuel that is